



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

This past week, members of our staff met with Superintendent Steve Martin and his staff about how we continue to collaborate on the promotion of Arizona's crown jewel -- the Grand Canyon National Park. During our travels through northern Arizona, we also had the opportunity to meet with tourism and community leaders in Williams, Tusayan and Flagstaff to share what's new in their communities as well as discuss AOT's newest initiative, the Arizona Centennial.

As you may know, the Centennial will be a year-long, statewide celebration culminating on Arizona's 100th Statehood day February 14, 2012. In preparation for the planning of this important milestone, AOT is releasing the FY09 Rural Tourism Development Grant program (RTDGP) that has new guidelines providing priority funding to projects that contain a Centennial component.

RTDGP is a competitive grant program that provides matching funds for tourism-related economic development projects in rural communities throughout Arizona. The goal of these projects is to strengthen regional and local economies and expand tourism development.

The FY09 RTDGP guidelines will be available online later this week. Please take advantage of this great opportunity!

For more information, please read the *AOT News Flash* section below.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Rural Tourism Development Grant Program Guidelines Available This Week!

The Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) guidelines for FY09 will be available beginning **Wednesday, September 17, 2008!** The objective of this competitive grant program is to provide coordinated funding for tourism related infrastructure projects in rural communities throughout the state. The funding amount for FY09 is \$500,000. These funds assist rural economic development through tourism to strengthen the regional and local economies and expand tourism in rural and Tribal communities throughout Arizona. The primary function of the infrastructure project must be tourism development and the project must be designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development. Eligible entities include not-for-profits, government organizations and tribal government.

New for FY09! Projects that contain an Arizona centennial component will receive priority funding. A detailed description of the criteria will be included in the FY09 guidelines and projects must comply with these guidelines to be considered a centennial project.

The FY09 RTDGP Guidelines define centennial projects as:

- Projects that include restoration of historic properties appropriate for use in the observance of the Arizona Centennial.
- Projects that provide a sense of unity and pride by accentuating the diverse nature of the State's tourist destinations.

Applications are available on AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov under the Grants section. Applications must be received by AOT no later than 5 p.m. **Wednesday, October 15, 2008.**

If you have any questions, please contact Glenn Schlottman, Tourism Education and Development Manager at 602-364-3727 or via e-mail at gschlottman@azot.gov. For information on the Arizona Centennial please contact Karen Churchard at 602-364-4158 or via e-mail at kchurchard@azot.gov.

SAVE the DATE: ATU's Interactive Marketing Workshop

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop **Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle.**

The "Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle" workshop is an informative and in-depth look at four of the most common interactive / online marketing elements: Search, E-mail, Social and Analytics. Building upon the previous Arizona Tourism University workshop, 'How to

Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy,' this year's workshop will expand upon these 'Four Keys' to provide attendees with real-world examples, tips and tools that can be applied to their current interactive marketing campaigns.

Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle will be held from **9:00 a.m. to Noon** in the following locations:

Tuesday, October, 28 – [White Stallion Ranch](#)

Thursday, October 30 – [Lowell Observatory](#)

Neither of these dates work with your schedule? Then take advantage of our new online opportunity!

This year, AOT is proud to introduce ATU Online. We will be offering all of our workshops over the Internet in the form of a webinar. These condensed versions will offer the same great information as the workshops. The inaugural class is **Thursday, November 6**. Be sure to register for the class!

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Lake Havasu City Tourism Survey](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

German Trade Show Opportunity

AOT would like to invite you to join us at International Tourismus Boerse (ITB), the largest travel industry trade show in the world. ITB will be held March 11–15, 2009 in Berlin, Germany. More than 1,000,000 trade visitors and 11,000 exhibitors from 180 countries are expected to attend. ITB is not an appointment show; however, Arizona's representatives in Germany do schedule appointments with German, Austrian and Swiss tour operators and media representatives.

Participation fees are as follows:

- DMO's: \$2,500 for the primary delegate and \$1000 for the second delegate (plus travel).
- Suppliers: \$2,000 for primary delegate and \$1000 for the second delegate (plus travel).

If you are interested in attending, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at lbelonio@azot.gov.

French Sales Mission Opportunity

AOT will be conducting a three-day sales mission to France March 16–18, 2009. The mission will take place immediately following the International Tourismus Boerse (ITB) in Berlin and will be made up of trade and media appointments, followed by an event in Paris. AOT has carried

out an annual sales mission to France since 2006, which has resulted in an increase of the number of French tour operators featuring Arizona from 64 in 2006 to 74 in 2008, a growth of 15.6 percent. This mission will once again will be an excellent opportunity to further highlight Arizona to this important and growing European market.

The cost to participate (excluding travel) will be:

- DMO's: \$1,500 for the primary delegate / \$500 for the second delegate.
- Suppliers: \$1,000 for the primary delegate / \$500 for the second delegate.

For additional information or a participation form, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364 3725 or via e-mail at lbeldonio@azot.gov.

Industry News

TIA President to Speak in Phoenix October 22, 2008

Roger Dow, President & CEO of the Travel Industry Association and former SVP Global Sales for Marriott, will share insights on the relatively unknown fact that the world pie of global travel is rapidly growing, while America's slice is shrinking. The negative impact on the U.S. economy since 2000 has been \$137 billion and 229,000 jobs. Combine this with the U.S. domestic air travel system in crisis and the outlook is not encouraging for business. In his presentation, "American's 'on sale' – so why aren't overseas travelers beating down our doors," Mr. Dow will discuss current market conditions, future travel industry trends and what can be done to turn the situation around. With travel and tourism being such a major part of Arizona's economy and affecting so many businesses, you won't want to miss this!

The presentation, sponsored by the Economic Club of Phoenix, will be at the Arizona Biltmore, Wednesday, October 22. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. with the program beginning at noon. For more information, visit <http://wpcarey.asu.edu/ecp/>.

Staycations: Get the Facts and More at TIA's Marketing Outlook Forum

The Staycations being planned by U.S. travelers this year may be homebased, but they certainly are not homebound. Additionally, the economy and other factors are not keeping as many people home as anticipated. According to a recent survey of 2,231 U.S. adults, 75 percent said that they are planning a leisure trip during the next six months, while only nine percent said that they are planning staycations over the same period. But of those staying local, nearly 25 percent are planning to stay at a hotel, motel or resort during their staycations and will likely become backyard tourists, visiting nearby sites, theme parks and other attractions. These results from the Travel Industry Association/Ypartnership travelhorizons survey is a preview of the valuable information that will be presented during TIA's Marketing Outlook Forum on October 27-30, 2008 in Portland, Oregon.

During two full days, more than 50 of the travel industry's leaders will address changes in the travel, offer predictions about the future, and provide practical insight in where to look for new markets of opportunity. Plus, all attendees will receive free admittance to two professional development workshops being conducted by the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts research team on October 30. An early bird registration rate is available through September 12. For the complete schedule and to register, go to www.tia.org/mof.

Tumacacori Turns 100 on September 15, 2008

On Sept. 15, it will be one hundred years since [President Theodore Roosevelt](#) signed the proclamation establishing Tumacacori National Monument, setting aside the ruin of the Tumacacori mission church to be protected for the education and enjoyment of future generations. Renamed by Congress in 1990, Tumacacori National Historical Park now protects the ruins of three missions – Tumacacori, Guevavi, and Calabazas. The public is invited to join the [National Park Service](#) and the Friends of Tumacacori at the park's centennial birthday party, beginning with a commemoration program at 10 a.m. on Sept. 15. The commemoration program will feature music by Mariachi Chuk Shon and three speakers: retired [University of Arizona](#) Folklorist [Dr. Jim Griffith](#), Desert Museum Education Specialist Jesus Garcia, and National Park Service Deputy Regional Director Tony Schetzle. There also will be an introduction of the people who have helped with a 12-year museum project. The all new, state-of-the-art museum will not quite be quite ready for a ribbon cutting, but will be available for guided preview tours. The first tour of the museum will begin with 10 people at 11:30 a.m. and will be followed every 10 minutes throughout the day by another tour. For more information, call the park, 520-398-2341.

TIA to Testify on Tourism Promotion Act

The subcommittee on commerce, trade and consumer protection of the House Energy and Commerce Committee marks the seventh anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with a hearing on the "Economic and Security Concerns in Tourism and Commerce." In testimony prepared for the hearing and made available to TRAVEL ADVANCE, Geoffrey Freeman, senior vice president, public affairs for the Travel Industry Association, will tell lawmakers that "millions of travelers are avoiding the U.S. due to concerns over long delays in visa issuance and an unfriendly and complicated entry experience--both of which have lead to a global perception that foreign visitors are not as welcome as they were prior to 9/11." Making matters worse, Freeman said, "the foreign press has fueled negative perceptions and encouraged foreign nationals not to travel to America."

The decline in visitation to the U.S. is not limited to tourists, Freeman said. "From 2004 to 2005, for example, business travel to the U.S. fell 10 percent according to the World Travel Market. Over this same period, business travel to Europe increased by 8 percent." Freeman said the travel community has been working with Congress and the Bush administration to develop a set of comprehensive solutions to America's international travel problems. TIA and other industry groups are working with federal agencies to find ways to improve access to visas for legitimate travelers and make the entry process more user friendly. A key component, Freeman said, is the need to clearly communicate new and ongoing security changes.

Freeman urged the passage of H.R. 3232, The Travel Promotion Act, which would establish an independent, non-profit corporation to operate a nationally coordinated, public-private campaign to counter negative perceptions of America's entry process, clearly communicate U.S. travel policies and promote the U.S. as a premier international destination. "Now, more than ever, the world needs to hear a clear and simple message from the United States. Many things may have changed since 9/11, but one thing hasn't: America is open and welcoming," Freeman said. (*A TA Special Report*)

USTOA Urges Presidential Candidates to Support Tourism

The U.S. Tour Operators Association is urging the presidential candidates to address the importance of tourism and its impact on the U.S. economy in their platforms. Since 2000, the decline in travel has cost the American economy \$140 billion, and more than 230,000 jobs lost, said USTOA Chairman Charlie Ball in a Sept. 10 letter to each of the candidates. Underscoring the importance of tourism, Ball pointed out that, as the third-largest industry in the U.S., tourism

represents \$740 billion in expenditures within the U.S., contributing significantly to tax revenue. Ball said the current airline crisis must be addressed. In its letter, USTOA addressed a number of crucial issues impeding the tourism industry. For one, airline stability and the current airline crisis requires immediate attention and leadership to regain the confidence of the traveling public, said Bob Whitley, USTOA president. "The current environment of fluid pricing for everything from baggage fees to seat selection and fuel surcharges is a source of constant frustration to travelers and tour operators alike. While we certainly understand the sanctity of an airline's right to price their product, we believe that a consistent, predictable and administrable means of handling these changes would be a significant step forward for all concerned."

Stating that America benefits from more visitors, the USTOA letter offers a number of areas and concrete steps to stimulate travel to the U.S., calling upon the candidates to: 1) Support the Travel Promotion Act, which seeks to encourage inbound programs and foreign travel as a means to stimulate the economy and add to the employment base. Despite an increase in global travel, international visitation to the U.S. has declined, in part, as a result of inconveniences imposed on foreigners entering as tourists, the letter notes. 2) Expand the Visa Waiver Act to more countries, thereby creating fewer obstacles and encouraging tourism and commerce among nations. 3) Simplify the WHTI (Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative), whose complexity is impeding travel between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. More focus is needed on establishing uniform standards that are easier to implement and that everyone can understand. 4) Create a cabinet-level position for tourism to assist in informing thoughtful, positive policy-making to benefit the entire travel and hospitality sector.

As tourism leaders and advocates on behalf of more than 11 million annual customers, USTOA, in its letter, has offered the candidates counsel and input to help stimulate tourism, promote employment and revitalize the economy. "We want to be sure that whoever gets into office understands the importance and benefits of this vital industry to the economy and to the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people," said Whitley. The USTOA letter follows the association's endorsement in mid-August of NTA's call for an Executive Office of Travel and Tourism Policy. USTOA numbers 150 of the top companies with offices in the U.S. selling tours and vacation packages worldwide. For more information, call 800-GO-USTOA (800-468-7862) or visit www.ustoa.com.